

EDUCATION LEADS TO OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUNG AMERICANS

A bipartisan majority passed the No Child Left Behind Act to improve our public schools, but Republicans have fought against providing the funding promised. Because of this, millions of children will not get the smaller classes, better teachers, and help with reading and math they were promised. Due to record-high financial barriers, more than 400,000, low- and moderate-income high school graduates who are fully prepared to attend a four-year college will be unable to do so, but Republicans have done nothing to lower the cost of college. Democrats believe that every child deserves the chance to go to a good school, and that a college education should be available to everyone who will work for it.

Republicans propose to freeze maximum Pell Grant. Despite rising college costs, President Bush freezes the maximum Pell Grant at \$4,050. This is a third year in a row that the President has frozen or cut the maximum Pell Grant. While campaigning in 2000, President Bush pledged to make college more affordable and accessible by increasing the maximum Pell Grant for freshmen to \$5,100, but he has yet to make good on his promise.

Republicans propose to freeze or cut college loans and work-study. The Bush budget cuts funding for Perkins Loans by \$100 million. It also freezes or eliminates funding for campus-based student aid programs, resulting in the loss of grants, work-study, and loans to about 78,000 students. This year, tuition at state universities increased nationwide by as much as 40 percent in some states.

Republicans propose to cut \$316 million from vocational education and community colleges and make college loans more expensive. The Bush budget cuts \$316 million from vocational education and community colleges. This new round of cuts is in addition to more than \$1.5 billion in proposed cuts to job training and vocational education programs since he took office. In addition, the Bush budget requires student loan guaranty agencies to collect a one-percent insurance premium from students beginning this year, costing students \$4.0 billion over 10 years.

Republicans propose to eliminate state college scholarships program. The Bush budget eliminates the \$66 million Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnerships (LEAP) initiative, which encourages states to establish college scholarships for college students. In 2001-2002, the federal investment in LEAP leveraged more than \$1 billion in matching state spending.

Democrats want to boost college opportunities and making college more affordable. Democrats want to make higher education more affordable by increasing the maximum Pell Grant from \$4,050 to \$5,800, doubling the HOPE Scholarship tax credit from \$1,500 per student to \$3,000 per student, and making the HOPE tax credit refundable. Democrats want to create incentives for colleges and universities to reduce costs, expand assistance to minority serving institutions, simplify application procedures for federal grants and loans, and increase support for job and technical training.

Democrats want to keep our promises to children and parents by investing in education reform. Democrats want to fully fund the No Child Left Behind Act and want to raise student achievement in core subjects like reading and math, demand results from our schools, provide after-school programs, involve parents, and expand early childhood education programs like Head Start.

To improve education, we must expand early childhood education programs. Democrats are fighting for more and better pre-school programs, to improve teacher training, to improve accountability, and to increase access to Head Start – a highly successful, comprehensive, early childhood program. But Republicans have essentially frozen funding for Head Start, and want to eliminate the comprehensive health, education, and nutrition services provided to children.

